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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with President Putin of Russia (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
President Putin

Notetakers: Colin Crosby, David Lee, and
Jenna Galyean

Interpreter: Peter Afanasenko

DATE, TIME April 5, 2003, 8:04 - 8:23 a.m. EST
AND PLACE: Camp David

The President: Good morning, Vladimir. How are you? (U)

President Putin: I am fine, thank you. How are you? (U)

The President: Good sir, thanks. I'm calling to say thank you for receiving Condoleezza Rice to meet with you and senior members of your administration. (U)

President Putin: I am aware of the fact that she is arriving tomorrow. Moreover, I have an additional proposal to make. Our defense minister is supposed to travel to South Korea, and then to Japan. I suggest that he then travel further to Washington to meet with Mr. Rumsfeld there. I must tell you bluntly that, in the context of hostilities in Iraq, it might not look favorable for me to keep up the high-level relationship between Russia and the U.S., but this would not be the right thing to do. We have an agenda in addition to Iraq between us. That's the prospect of ratification in Russia of the Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions and the subject of non-proliferation. In response to American proposals, we also have our proposal on ABM. And on top of that, also our joint effort in combating terrorism, and regarding Afghanistan. And, I will be honest with you, this is a timely thing to do. We are concerned about the radicalization of Muslim organizations. Up until now I have managed to keep them under control and I am confident I can continue to do so. But it would be right to reiterate our mutual desire to renew U.S.-Russian relations. These

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are our proposals that will soon be realized, if you believe this is worthwhile. (S)

The President: Yes, I do. I look forward to seeing Sergei when he comes over here. I would like him to come by and say hello to me. (S)

President Putin: If you would find time for that it would be helpful. (S)

The President: Easy for me to do. He is a good man, and I know he is close to you. It will help us move past this difficult period. (S)

President Putin: Especially since my first language is German. His is English, he's an old hand at English. (S)

The President: He's very good at English, and your English is better than my Russian. (S)

President Putin: Unfortunately, his Spanish is worse than yours. (S)

The President: How are you feeling these days? (S)

President Putin: I'm okay. The Muslims are fighting us. I'm worried about them sending weapons and volunteers. Otherwise, I would be fine. (S)

The President: We need to talk about that. (S)

President Putin: We have responded in a very tough manner. We have summoned the leaders of those organizations and given a very strict warning. I also spoke on national television and made a public statement to that effect. I have used soft language, I have plainly said that we have no plans to get involved. (S)

The President: I appreciate that, Vladimir. (S)

President Putin: Igor Ivanov will also continue his contacts with Powell. He had discussions with Powell in Brussels. We do have proposals regarding development of a plan for our bilateral relationship which will set benchmarks. It would be nice if they could follow through. (S)

The President: Yes, they will. I look forward to seeing Sergei. At some point, we can get together. (S)

President Putin: I must tell you that so far we have been able to keep these demonstrations in line. Even if we have some, they are not on a large scale. This is different from Europe. (S)

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The President: I appreciate that. I have been watching carefully. It's one thing to make a point and another to harass and make personal attacks. You have refrained from personal criticism, and I appreciate that. (S)

President Putin: In this connection, I would also ask you to exert your influence as much as possible so that in the U.S. there would not be anti-Russian feelings about special Russian equipment in Iraq. (S)

The President: I will. I think the American people will appreciate the fact that you said you would get to the bottom of it. (S)

President Putin: Well, just for your knowledge, it's not that I have just said I will get to the bottom of this matter. Already, our special agents have gotten to work on these people, they have not found anything yet. In fact, we do know what kind of systems the Iraqis have; Soviet systems, and anti-tanks systems from the U.S. They do not have modern Russian systems there. Generally speaking, Russia and the U.S. have a bad bilateral dynamic. We will discuss it with Condi here. Under any circumstances, we should not remove from our agenda our personal meeting in St. Petersburg. I don't know what will happen with Iraq. But the sooner the better. Whatever happens there militarily, we should not remove from our agenda our meeting in St. Petersburg. The U.S. President should not hide from anybody. While some people might like it, others will not. In reality, it's a matter of vision, and is of great importance for our bilateral relationship. This meeting will benefit one and all. Now, in addition to all these sometimes ugly TV pictures of war, people should take a look at others things. The International Space Station needs to be looked at jointly. And then there are other questions. We should let all people see this picture of us working together. (S)

The President: Thank you, I appreciate that very good advice. I think our relationship can be repaired. We are starting this weekend with Condi's visit, and there is no question that at some point and time we will have a visit and talk face to face. Thanks for taking my call. My best to Lyudmila and the girls. (S)

President Putin: Thank you very much. All the best to your family. (U)

The President: Thank you. Bye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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